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ADDRESS OF THE RETIRING PRESIDENT OF THE  
SOCIETY, AT THE EIGHTH ANNUAL  
MEETING, MARCH 28, 1896.

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BY CHAS. BURCKHALTER.

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LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—Following the custom of my predecessors retiring from this chair, I briefly submit for your consideration a few thoughts on the condition, progress, and aims of our Society. The Astronomical Society of the Pacific, with this meeting, has reached the age of seven years, and at no time has it been as strong in ability or a more potent factor in astronomy. With the same conservative management in the future that has characterized the past, this influence will grow and expand.

The fortunate occurrence, almost at our doors, of a total solar eclipse, gave the Society birth. The eclipse of New Year's Day, 1889, brought out and together the active and latent astronomical talent of this city and surrounding towns, and laid the foundation of our Society, and resulted in a united, intelligent and successful effort to add to our knowledge of the science, by the work of local amateurs and their friends. The Director of the LICK Observatory saw an opportunity of making this somewhat indiscriminate coming together of amateur photographers and astronomers the basis of a permanent organization. The first call resulted in a preliminary meeting in the rooms of the Pacific Coast Amateur Photographic Association, on February 7, 1889, and the first regular meeting, held in the March following, witnessed the formal organization of our Society, *sans* everything but boundless enthusiasm.

reason why you should not prepare papers for our meetings. They need not, necessarily, be published, and you may feel confident that anything that will interest you will interest a majority of the members who attend the meetings, and it should be borne in mind that many members are only in the A B C of astronomy, and papers read by those not far advanced are more likely to be understood, and therefore more often useful, than the finished paper of the professional astronomer. The object of the meetings is to instruct each other, rather than to attract the attention of astronomers. This is a Society of amateurs and professionals, not a Society of experts alone. As a Society, we have been remarkably fortunate in receiving generous gifts from some of our members, while the LICK Observatory, which is our foundation-stone, has received gifts worthy of princes from others. I need only mention ALEXANDER MONTGOMERY, who founded and endowed our library, and JOSEPH A. DONOHUE, who founded and endowed the Comet-Medal.

At the present time, preparations are being made by the LICK Observatory to send an eclipse expedition of four members to Japan, to observe the eclipse of August 9th, under the direction of Professor SCHAEBERLE, at the expense of Colonel C. F. CROCKER. Ex-President WM. M. PIERSON generously furnished the funds to equip one of the members with an expensive and novel telescope for this special work, while Mrs. PHŒBE HEARST has given liberally to carry on the necessary experiments to investigate the possibilities of this novelty, and I take pride in saying that every one of the members of the expedition, and all the generous contributors, are our fellow-members.

In conclusion, I congratulate you upon the successful work accomplished in our short history and the wide-spreading influence of the Society. At this time, when astronomy is making such startling progress, and its popular study is so wonderfully increasing, one of the greatest results we can achieve for its advancement is to induce others to share our privileges, and to bring them within the unseen yet powerful influence that unity of thought and purpose alone can give.